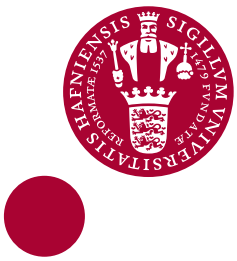

The politics of international theory

reading Waltz 1979 as a classic

Wivel, Anders

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6 William Scheuerman, *Hans Morgenthau: Realism and Beyond*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009, p. 102.
7 John Vasquez, in *The Power of Power Politics*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1983, showed how realism dominated up until the 1970s. For an updated analysis of realism's hold on the field of IR, see Thomas Walker and Jeffrey Morton 'Re-Assessing the "Power of Power Politics" Thesis: Is Realism still Dominant?', *International Studies Review*, 2005, vol. 7, 341–56. Walker and Morton show a decline in realist influence, especially in the 1990s.
8 Stephan Haggard and Beth Simmons, 'Theories of International Regimes', *International Organization*, 1987, vol. 41, 491–517, at p. 491.
9 Stephen Krasner, 'Structural Causes and Regime Consequences: Regimes as Intervening Variables', *International Organization,* 1982, vol. 36, 185–205.
10 While Keohane and Nye did not coin the phrase 'international regime', they did popularize it. In the Afterword to the second edition, Keohane and Nye acknowledge their debt to John Ruggie's earlier work published in 1975 (p. 250). See John Ruggie, 'International Responses to Technology: Concepts and Trends', *International Organization*, 1975, vol. 29, 557–83.
11 For recent discussions of the logic of case selection, see Gary King, Robert Keohane and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994, and Alexander George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005.
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14 Thomas Paine, 'Letter to the Abbé Raynal', in Daniel E. Wheeler (ed.), *Life and Writings of Thomas Paine*, New York: Vincent Park and Company, [1782] 1908, p. 240. For a more thorough overview of Paine and Kant in IR, see Thomas C. Walker, 'Two Faces of Liberalism: Kant, Paine, and the Question of Intervention', *International Studies Quarterly,* 2008, vol. 52, 444–68.
15 For a discussion of how challenges to the dominant paradigm are often dismissed in IR, see Thomas C. Walker, 'The Perils of Paradigm Mentalities: Revisiting Kuhn, Lakatos, and Popper', *Perspectives on Politics*, 2010, vol. 8, 433–51.
16 Cited in John Mueller, *Retreat from Doomsday: The Obsolescence of Major War*, New York: Basic Books, 1989, p. 30.
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20 Robert O. Koehane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy,* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984.
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16 The politics of international theory: reading Waltz 1979 as a classic

Anders Wivel[1]

No book on international relations has generated more debate over the past three decades than Kenneth Waltz's *Theory of International Politics* (hereafter *TIP*) published in 1979.[2] Today, the book is widely regarded as a modern classic.[3] It continues to be extensively cited in the study of international relations by admirers as well as critics, and few university students would be able to take an introductory course on international relations without becoming acquainted with Kenneth Waltz's so-called neorealist – or structural realist – theory, although many will only learn about the theory from textbooks, often written by authors critical of Waltz's theory, and only a small minority will read the book cover-to-cover.

TIP leaves us with no testable hypotheses about the nature or processes of international relations. Its methodological assumptions are complex, at times foggy, and its sparse and minimalist framework has been proven partly irrelevant and partly wrong, even by scholars taking their point of departure in realist assumptions. Yet the book has had an enormous impact on thinking about international relations, and it continues to be an indispensable starting point for anyone wishing to discuss, develop or apply a realist perspective on international relations.

Despite its continued importance to the study of international relations, the position of Waltz's structural realist theory within the discipline of International Relations (IR) is changing. Neorealism no longer plays a central role in the debates regarding how to explain and understand international relations or what the discipline of IR is or ought to be.[4] One would be hard pressed to find a recent article in any one of the top ten journals on international relations, which uses neorealism as its analytical framework. Instead 'Waltz 1979' has become a standard reference in modern realism, rather like 'Carr 1939', 'Morgenthau 1948' – or 'Waltz 1959': everybody knows it, few have read it, and virtually no one uses it as point of departure for analysing international relations.

In 1979, following a decade of political, normative and academic obscurity, *TIP* marked the cool, calm and collected return of realism to the centre stage, in both practical-political and scholarly debates about international relations. During the next two decades neorealism played a major role in debates about how to explain and understand international relations[5] before being edged out by a new generation of 'post-neorealist' realists.[6] The result for neorealism was, however, not marginalization but canonization. Attacks became fewer and further between and celebrations of the contribution made by Waltz are now the order of the day.[7] *TIP* has become a classic.

How to write an IR classic (Don't worry, it's easy)

What does it take to write an IR classic? Using neorealism as a prism, it is possible to identify five rules.

1. Ask big questions of both academic and real-world importance

Neorealism seeks to explain the occurrence of war, not the outbreak of any particular war.[8] This is a genuine puzzle: why do wars occur? Throughout history there has been a sustained effort among policy-makers and populations to avoid or at least limit the occurrence of wars. For political elites and populations all around the globe, answering this question could help to prevent immense human suffering and huge material costs. For IR scholars, explaining war constitutes the primary *raison d'être* of their academic discipline. It is no coincidence that the world's first Department of International Politics was founded in Aberystwyth, UK, just after the end of the World War I in 1919, and that its chair was named after US President Woodrow Wilson, who only a year earlier had made his famous 'Fourteen Points' speech outlining his vision for a peaceful world order.

2. Stay focused and stick to your stump speech

One of the most important reasons for the success of *TIP* is that Waltz has a simple message, and that he is determined to get it across. The basic logic of the theory is simple and easy to understand: the international system is anarchic, i.e. in contrast to domestic society the international system is characterized by the lack of monopoly on the legitimate use of force (pp. 103–04). Thus, 'in anarchy there is no overarching authority to prevent others from using violence, or the threat of violence, to dominate or even to destroy them'.[9] For this reason, '[t]he international imperative is "take care of yourself"!' (p. 107). States take care of themselves by seeking to provide for their own security. Thus, the primary goal of states in anarchy is to survive. Waltz acknowledges that this is a 'radical simplification' and that '[b]eyond the survival motive, the aims of states may be endlessly varied', but he maintains that assuming that states seek primarily to survive is a useful assumption, because '[s]urvival is a prerequisite to achieving any goals that states may have, other than promoting their own disappearance as political entities' (pp. 91–92). This view of international politics has two specific consequences for state behaviour. First, states are 'like units' in the sense that they are autonomous political units performing the same basic functions such as defence, judicial tasks, policing, monetary policy, etc. (pp. 95–97). Few states dare to outsource these core functions to other states, because they fear that this will create dependency. Even when cooperating on other issues each state tends to focus on relative gains, because in anarchy a disproportionate gain by a cooperation partner may be used to threaten or destroy the state (p. 105). Thus, cooperation is difficult unless special provisions are made in order to compensate those states that are disadvantaged, and unless rules are made in order to allow for renegotiation of international treaties.[10] Second, states tend to balance power, either by internal means, i.e. armament, or by external means, i.e. alliances (pp. 117–21). The most important threat to state survival in anarchy is the power of other states, and therefore states must constantly strive to prevent others from achieving a dominant position. Since the publication of *TIP*, Waltz has stayed on course defending these points, both when debating his own work with critics,[11] and when analysing the international system in the aftermath of the Cold War.[12]

3. Challenge the orthodoxy, politically and academically, but stay safely within the dominant discourse

Almost by definition, realism is 'a hard sell' in liberal societies, because of its claim that the struggle for power, not ideological differences or ethical considerations, is at the heart of all international relations, even for liberal democracies.[13] Moreover, realism advances a pessimistic, almost fatalistic, view of international relations, which contrasts with the expectation of both the electorate and political elites in modern societies that the primary task of politicians is to solve problems and actively face the challenges that confront the societies they govern. Kenneth Waltz is often applauded for his thought-provoking ideas that go against the political and academic grain,[14] and there is definitely some truth in this. Waltz has argued that the spread of nuclear weapons may enhance peace, because the destructive power of these weapons will create an incentive to avoid military conflict,[15] that the USA is no different from other great powers and that ideas matter little to its foreign policy,[16] and that terrorism has left the basic characteristics of international relations virtually untouched, because it does not threaten state survival.[17] However, compared to post-World War II realists, such as Hans J. Morgenthau and Reinhold Niebuhr, who took their point of departure in a distinctively conservative and European conception of man and a traditionalist view of social science, Waltz represents a realist perspective that is much more synchronized with both political and academic discourse in the USA. Politically, *TIP* refrains from explicating a particular view of man, leaving it philosophically antiseptic and compatible with US liberalism.[18] Academically, Waltz clearly distinguishes his own neorealist 'theory' from realist 'thought',[19] thereby signalling that his own work – in contrast to the work of past realists – meets the contemporary standards of philosophy of science (p. 1).[20] Acting as an agent provocateur within the discourse, rather than challenging the discourse in itself, is not necessarily a bad idea. Part of the secret to *TIP*'s success is that Waltz has managed to keep his provocations within the political and academic mainstream.

4. Provide only general answers

The devil is in the detail. Avoid the devil. According to Waltz, international structure does not determine state behaviour, but '[s]tructures shape and shove'[21] 'by rewarding some types of behaviour and punishing others'.[22] For this reason, neorealism is a theory of consistency and continuity. 'A constancy of structure explains the recurrent patterns and features of international-political life' (p. 70), and for this reason, neorealism 'deals in regularities and repetitions'.[23] In sum, it is a theory of constraints[24] that does not explain 'why state X made a certain move last Tuesday' (p. 122), but simply aims to tell us a few big and important things about international relations. This position allows Waltz to discuss the big and enduring questions about international relations, but without ever exposing his own theory to falsification. In fact, this was one of the major points of criticism raised by Robert Keohane in the scholarly debate following the publication of *TIP*: 'realism does not provide a satisfactory theory of world politics, if we require of an adequate theory that it provides a set of plausible and testable answers to questions of state behaviour under specified conditions'.[25] The

general nature of the theory means that we can never falsify neorealism. The theory is a rather blunt instrument if we are to understand or explain the complexities of world politics or the foreign policy of individual countries. Still, this should not detract from the heuristic value of the theory. By radically simplifying the complexity of international relations into a few abstract assumptions, neorealism helps us to understand some of its basic dynamics.

5. *Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee*

In academic debates – as in boxing – you need to be light on your feet and strong in your punch. After initially outlining his understanding of theory (Chapter 1), Waltz devotes three chapters of *TIP* (Chapters 2, 3 and 4) to mapping the efforts to create a theory of international politics thus far and to explain why they failed. Next, Waltz outlines his own theory and its implications for how we understand international relations and explains why it is the only genuine theory of international politics (Chapters 5 to 9). By following this procedure, Waltz engages in a discussion with some of the most prominent scholars at the time of the publication of the book. Additionally, it allows him to map the discipline of international relations and to assess its blind spots, and thereby position his own theory as a solution to the problems identified in the existing literature. Thus, Waltz is strong in his punch both when identifying the limitations of other approaches and the contribution of his own work. However, he is much more evasive during the subsequent discussions of his neorealist theory, when he seems mainly to defend and repeat his initial positions.[26] As noted by one sympathetic critic discussing the lack of bold hypotheses in *TIP*, 'Waltz seems preoccupied with building grand fortifications in its defence, rather than exposing it to constant danger'.[27]

How to succeed as an IR classic (unfortunately this is partly out of your control)

The style and content of a theory do not alone make it a classic. As the title of the book signals, *TIP* does not offer a specific analysis of the Cold War, but a general theory of international relations. However, the political and academic context of the book has been important to its success. Kenneth Waltz published *TIP* in the context of superpower rivalry between the USA and the Soviet Union, and the major assumptions, conclusions and debates of the book appear to be coloured by the experience of the Cold War.

Two arguments, in particular, spoke to a Cold War audience. First, Waltz made a clear distinction between bipolar systems – international systems with only two superpowers – and multipolar systems – international systems with more than two great powers. He argued that bipolar systems were the more stable of the two, because shifting alliances had little impact on the balance of power in a bipolar system, owing to the overwhelming relative power of the two superpowers (p. 170–76). Still, war between the superpowers was not ruled out, because of the risk of overreaction. For many observers this analysis had direct relevance for understanding the Cold War between the USA and the Soviet Union. In particular, the end of détente and the beginning of the Second Cold War at the time of the publication of *TIP* provided a fertile ground for a theory focusing on superpower rivalry and its consequences for international security. Second, Waltz argued that the destructive power of nuclear

weapons could help keep wars 'cold'. Thus, while the anarchic structure of the international system created an ever-present risk of conflict, nuclear weapons helped to reduce this risk by raising the cost of conflict between nuclear powers (p. 188).[28] At the same time, nuclear weapons reinforced bipolarity by raising the threshold for great power status, because of the technological and economic costs associated with becoming a nuclear power (pp. 180–83).

In addition, the claims made in *TIP* played a central role in two of the most important scholarly debates on international relations in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Neorealists and neoliberal institutionalists debated the consequences of international anarchy.[29] Proponents of the two perspectives agreed that states were the primary actors in international relations, first and foremost in pursuing their own interests. However, neoliberals found that actors with common interests would aim to maximize absolute gains; not relative gains as argued by the neorealists.

In a second debate, critical theorists, constructivists, and poststructuralists – sometimes grouped together under the heading 'postmodern' approaches by realists[30] – attacked neorealists for being the primary exponents of a 'backward discipline' more generally,[31] and an outdated and highly problematic conception of security more specifically, because of the neorealist focus on the military security of states.

None of the combatants in these debates were able to declare victory. The neorealism versus neoliberalism debate resulted in a rationalist research programme on international institutions learning from both approaches. The neorealism versus postmodernism debate seemed at first to mainly galvanize the positions of both camps. However, it also spurred a growing realist *and* postmodernist interest in classical realism and how it compares with neorealism.

The logic(s) of anarchy: polarity and history in a neorealist world

The anarchic structure of the international system creates a strong incentive for self-help behaviour characterized by relative gains seeking (in order to avoid power deficits vis-à-vis other states) and power balancing (in order to avoid domination by the strongest state in the system) thereby maximizing the chance of survival. However, according to neorealism '[a]narchy is what polarity makes of it'[32] in the sense that the relative distribution of capabilities in the system (measured as the number of systemic great powers, i.e. polarity) conditions the likelihood of balancing, and therefore also the likelihood of war. For this reason, *TIP* is concerned with the determinants of polarity as well as the consequences of particular polarities. Pole status depends on 'combined capabilities', i.e. 'how [potential pole states] score on *all* of the following items: size of population and territory, resource endowment, economic capability, military strength, political stability and competence' (p. 131). Using these criteria enables us to distinguish between multipolar systems – unstable because of shifting alliances and the omnipresent danger of miscalculation among the many actors, and bipolar systems – stable because the overwhelming power of only two actors makes shifting alliances insignificant for the balance of power (but at the same time susceptible to overreaction by the two superpowers following each other's every move).

However, looking at the international system since 1991, the most important category seems to be missing. The current international system is neither bipolar, nor multipolar, but unequivocally unipolar when measured by Waltzian standards.[33] This has important

consequences for neorealist balance of power logic. According to *TIP*, '[b]alance of power politics prevail wherever two, and only two, requirements are met: that the order be anarchic and that it be populated by units wishing to survive' (p. 121), but as noted by Wohlforth '[i]n any system there is a threshold concentration of power in the strongest state that makes a counterbalance prohibitively costly. This is what it means to call a system "unipolar"'.[34] Thus, whereas the logic of anarchy creates strong incentives to balance, the logic of unipolarity has the opposite effect. This leaves contemporary realists retaining Waltz's focus on the nature and consequences of international structure with a need to discuss and conceptualize unipolarity and its consequences for international relations. The general dynamics of international anarchy identified in *TIP* remain the starting point for these discussions, but their main concern is the re-conceptualization of balancing under unipolarity, typically in the form of so-called soft balancing defined as 'coalition building and diplomatic bargaining within international institutions, short of formal bilateral and multilateral military alliances'.[35]

Current unipolarity may not be the only historical anomaly challenging neorealist logic. *TIP* is based on a particular reading of history positing that '[t]he texture of international politics remains highly constant, patterns recur, and events repeat themselves endlessly' (p. 66). Diplomatic historians and IR scholars have challenged this reading by pointing to the multiple anomalies from neorealist expectations present in international history.[36] This does not necessarily undermine the logic of the theory, but it does challenge Waltz's claim that he has constructed a theory that is universally applicable across time and space.

New ideas Waltz in: neoclassical realism and the study of foreign policy

Waltz's insistence that *TIP* is strictly a theory of international politics, not foreign policy (p. 122),[37] has spurred an interest in how to combine Waltz's assumptions on international structure with explanatory variables such as domestic politics and the perceptions and intentions of leaders. Today the realist perspective on international relations is highly influenced by so-called neoclassical realists, who attempt 'to combine structural factors with domestic politics in order to explain foreign policy'.[38] Neoclassical realists open the 'black box' of the state and thereby return to a richer and more inclusive understanding of realism found in earlier formulations of the perspective. This development is not necessarily a contrast or challenge to neorealist theory,[39] but it does accentuate the need to explicate how neorealism may contribute to our understanding of foreign policy.

How may *TIP* contribute to realist theorizing on foreign policy? Neorealism tells us little about foreign policy per se but focuses instead on explaining 'international outcomes – phenomena that result from the interaction of two or more actors in the international system [such as] international cooperation, arms races, crisis bargaining, aggregate alignment patterns, and the war-proneness of the international system'.[40] The theory tells us about structural pressure, and the opportunities and limitations that follow for state action, but it tells us little about how states actually respond to these pressures (p. 73). Thus, *TIP* identifies the systemic demands on state external behaviour, but it does not tell us if and how these are met by the supply of foreign policy.

Still, foreign policy and international politics are not two distinct realms, 'since foreign policy is a constituting element *of* international politics',[41] and a structural theory is of little use if structural pressure does not affect state behaviour. Thus, it should

come as no surprise that neorealism has led to hypotheses about foreign policy. For instance, the imbalance of power between the USA and its allies following the Cold War has led to hypotheses about the foreign policy of a largely unrestrained power.[42] More controversially, it may be argued that the neorealist conceptions of competition and socialization, and in particular the interaction between these processes, can lead to hypotheses about foreign policy. As noted by Waltz, 'competition spurs the actors to accommodate their ways to the socially most acceptable and successful practices. Socialization and competition are two aspects of a process by which the variety of actors is reduced' (p. 77). From this starting point, neorealism may be used to generate hypotheses about the successful adaption of democratic states to systemic constraints,[43] the decision of European states to strengthen the institutions of the European Union,[44] and which foreign policy roles will be acceptable for particular states.[45]

Alternatively, *TIP* may be used as a minimalist starting point to which we gradually add complexity. Neorealism remains the basic theory providing us with our most fundamental hypotheses (e.g. states tend to balance power in an anarchic system), but neoclassical realism is used either to explain empirical deviations from these theoretical expectations, or it serves as a specification of the unspecified neorealist explanations:[46] structures 'shape and shove',[47] but they do not explain foreign policy.[48] By constructing a theory, which acknowledges the primacy of the international system, while at the same time theorizing variations in the impact of the international systemic structure on state behaviour, i.e. the variations in 'the relative importance of systemic versus domestic and individual level variables',[49] we may be able to explain foreign policy in a way which allows us to distinguish between general and context specific variations. In accordance with neorealist logic states may be seen as the primary actors (p. 93)[50] and members of the foreign policy executive as reflecting state interests. Variations in foreign policy may stem from domestic legislatures, interest groups, societal actors as well as external pressure and the ability of foreign policy makers to obtain and process information about their external environment.[51] Starting from 'a "top-down" conception of the state, where systemic forces ultimately drive external behaviour',[52] *TIP*'s understanding of international structure may be used as a starting point when adding first and second image variables in order to explain foreign policy by gradually adding complexity to the parsimonious starting point.[53] If used in this way *TIP* may be instrumental in ameliorating an 'identity dilemma' between the equally unattractive options of either restricting relist analysis to neorealist core assumptions and ending up with indeterminate explanations, or combining structural factors with other variables and ending up with a collection of *ad hoc* arguments which are indistinct from other theoretical perspectives.[54]

The future of *TIP* and neorealism

The style and content of Waltz's theory unite to make it a powerful, if imperfect, basis for analyses of international politics and foreign policy. For this reason, *TIP* is likely to retain a strong position within the realist perspective in the years to come. In addition, there is not a great deal of competition in the market for general theories of international relations. Whereas IR scholars of the post-World War II era were generally concerned with understanding the nature of international relations in general, the discipline is becoming increasingly specialized and compartmentalized into subfields and subcultures with only a very small minority of scholars making their own attempt at a theory of international politics. At the same time the object of inquiry continues to be

international relations as a whole, and this creates a desire to understand international relations as such rather than a small segment of it.[55] Thus, demand for general theories exceeds supply.

TIP remains a strong contender for meeting this demand in the future. Neoclassical realists may have overtaken its position as the coolest thing in realism, but at the same time, despite its flaws and shortcomings, Waltz's 1979 book has become a classic.

Notes

1 An earlier version of this chapter 'From Cool to Classic: Learning from Waltz (1979)' appeared in *Politik*, 2009, vol. 12, 42–47. A subsequent version of the paper benefited from presentations at the International Studies Association Catalytic Research Workshop 'Bridging the Transatlantic Divide: European and American Realism Reconsidered' in Montreal, Canada, 15 March 2011, and at an International Relations research seminar at the Department of Political Science, University of Copenhagen, Denmark, 12 April 2011. I thank all participants at these events and, in particular, Barry Buzan, Balkan Devlen, Birthe Hansen, Lene Hansen, Peter Viggo Jakobsen, Steven E. Lobell, Hans Mouritzen, Ulrik Pram Gad, Alexander Reichwein, Norrin M. Ripsman, Jeffrey W. Taliaferro and Ole Wæver.

2 Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979. Page numbers placed in parentheses in the text refer to this edition.

3 Chris Brown, 'Structural Realism, Classical Realism and Human Nature', in Ken Booth (ed.), *Realism and World Politics*, London: Routledge, 2011, pp. 143–57, at p. 143; cf. Ken Booth, 'Realism Redux: Contexts, Concepts, Contents', in Booth (ed.), *Realism and World Politics*, pp. 1–14, at pp. 3–6; Randall Schweller, 'The Progressiveness of Neoclassical Realism', in Colin Elman and Miriam Fendius Elman (eds), *Progress in International Relations Theory*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003, pp. 311–47, at p. 313; Stephen M. Walt, '"A Few Big and Important Things": The Enduring Legacy of Kenneth Waltz', *Politik*, 2005, vol. 8, 48–51.

4 Today, even realists taking their point of departure in neorealism are few and far between as exemplified by Randall Schweller's (somewhat exaggerated) claim that neoclassical realism represents the 'only game in town for the next and the current generation of realists' (Schweller, 'The Progressiveness of Neoclassical Realism', p. 345). For a notable exception to this trend, see Birthe Hansen, *Unipolarity and World Politics*, London: Routledge, 2011.

5 David A. Baldwin (ed.), *Neorealism and Neoliberalism*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1993; and Robert O. Keohane (ed.), *Neorealism and Its Critics*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1986.

6 Stephen G. Brooks, 'Dueling Realisms', *International Organization*, 1991, vol. 51, 445–77; Annette Freyberg-Inan, Ewan Harrison and Patrick James (eds), *Rethinking Realism in International Relations*, Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009; Steven E. Lobell, Norrin M. Ripsman and Jeffrey W. Taliaferro (eds), *Neoclassical Realism, The State, and Foreign Policy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009; Brian Rathbun, 'A Rose by Any Other Name: Neoclassical Realism as the Logical and Necessary Extension of Structural Realism', *Security Studies*, 2008, vol. 17, 294–321; Gideon Rose 'Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy', *World Politics*, 1998, vol. 51, 144–72; and Anders Wivel, 'Explaining Why State X Made a Certain Move Last Tuesday: The Promise and Limitations of Realist Foreign Policy Analysis', *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 2005, vol. 8, 355–80.

7 See e.g. the contributions to Booth (ed.), *Realism and World Politics*; and Andrew K. Hanami (ed.), *Perspectives on Structural Realism*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

8 Walt, '"A Few Big and Important Things"', p. 49; and Kenneth N. Waltz, 'The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory', in Robert I. Rotberg and Theodore K. Rabb (eds), *The Origin and Prevention of Major Wars*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, pp. 39–52.

9 Joseph M. Grieco, *Cooperation among Nations*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990, p. 38.

10 Cf. Grieco, *Cooperation among Nations*.

11 Kenneth N. Waltz, 'Reflections on Theory of International Politics: A Response to My Critics', in Robert O. Keohane (ed.), *Neorealism and Its Critics*, pp. 322–45; and Kenneth N. Waltz, 'Evaluating Theories', *The American Political Science Review*, 1997, vol. 91, 913–17.

12 See e.g. Kenneth N. Waltz, 'The Emerging Structure of International Politics', *International Security*, 1993, vol. 18, 44–79; Kenneth N. Waltz, 'Structural Realism after the Cold War', *International Security*, 2000, vol. 25, 5–41; and Kenneth N. Waltz 'The Continuity of International Politics', in Ken Booth and Tim Dunne (eds), *World in Collision*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, pp. 348–53.

13 John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, New York: Norton, 2001, pp. 22–27.

14 Hans Mouritzen, 'Kenneth Waltz: A Critical Rationalist between International Politics and Foreign Policy', in Iver B. Neumann and Ole Wæver (eds), *The Future of International Relations*, London: Routledge, 1997, pp. 66–89; Booth, 'Realism Redux'; and Walt, '"A Few Big and Important Things"'.

15 Kenneth N. Waltz, 'The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More May Be Better?', *Adelphi Papers*, 171, London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1981.

16 Kenneth N. Waltz, 'America as a Model for the World? A Foreign Policy Perspective', *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 1991, vol. 24, 667–70.

17 Waltz, 'The Continuity of International Politics'.

18 Keith L. Shimko, 'Realism, Neorealism and American Liberalism', *The Review of Politics*, 1992, vol. 54, 281–301, at p. 299.

19 Kenneth N. Waltz, 'Realist Thought and Neorealist Theory', *Journal of International Affairs*, 1990, vol. 44, 21–37.

20 In contrast, Ole Wæver argues that Waltz's view of theory contrasts with the mainstream view, but that few have noticed, see Ole Wæver, 'Waltz's Theory of Theory: The Pictorial Challenge to Mainstream IR', in Booth, *Realism and World Politics*, pp. 67–88.

21 Waltz, 'Reflections on Theory of International Politics', p. 343.

22 Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981, p. 85.

23 Waltz, 'The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory', p. 39.

24 Rathbun, 'A Rose by Any Other Name', p. 296.

25 Robert O. Keohane, 'Theory of World Politics: Structural Realism and Beyond', in Keohane (ed.), *Neorealism and Its Critics*, pp. 158–203, at p. 159.

26 E.g. Waltz, 'Reflections on Theory of International Politics'; and Waltz, 'Evaluating Theories'.

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17 The cosmopolitan turn: beyond realism and statism in Charles R. Beitz's *Political Theory and International Relations*

William Smith[1]

The normative study of international relations has gone from being a marginal concern to a dynamic research agenda.[2] This agenda – often labelled 'international political theory' – focuses on 'the moral dimension of international relations and the wider question of meanings and interpretation generated by the discipline'.[3] It not only addresses the traditional issue of warfare, but also examines the full range of moral duties owed by states and individuals to each other. The rise of international political theory can be associated with a broader revival in political theory, epitomized by the publication of John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice*.[4] This work defends principles of social justice for domestic institutions that regulate social activity. The book presents only a brief argument about international relations, with Rawls apparently rejecting the application of these principles to the international realm. Its publication did, however, inspire subsequent authors to explore this issue in greater depth, prompting an explosion of interest in arguments for and against applying principles of social justice to international relations.[5]

The insight that debates about social justice are relevant to international relations is the chief intellectual legacy of the arguments presented by the US political theorist Charles R. Beitz (born 1949) in *Political Theory and International Relations* (*PTIR*).[6] The first edition of *PTIR* appeared in 1979 and a revised edition, with a new afterword that clarifies and amends the arguments, appeared in 1999. An earlier version of the book had been prepared by Beitz as a doctoral dissertation, under the supervision of Thomas Scanlon and Dennis Thompson, while studying on the political philosophy programme at Princeton University, USA.[7] It is difficult to overestimate the impact that *PTIR* had on subsequent debates in international political theory. This is due in part to the way in which the book maps the hitherto uncharted terrain of the normative literature on international relations.[8] It is also, and more importantly, owing to its substantive conclusions, particularly its extension of Rawls's theory of justice from the domestic to the global realm. Given the significant developments in the field since the initial publication of *PTIR*, its continued status as a landmark text is a testament to the originality of its claims.[9]

This chapter explores the enduring significance of *PTIR* for reflection on the normative dimensions of international relations. The organizing theme is the book's presentation of a *cosmopolitan* alternative to the realist and statist paradigms that, according to Beitz, dominate modern thinking about international morality. The central insight of realism is associated with the claim that states should pursue their national interests over and above other moral principles. The central insight of statism, or 'the morality of states', is that states should treat each other as autonomous entities